

The Department of the Navy (DON) A+ Awards Program Guidance

1. Purpose. The purpose of this guidance is to act as an overall framework for the DON A+ Awards Program, and describes in more detail program expectations as laid out in UNSECNAV Memo. The Department of the Navy A+ Awards Program (dtd 14 March 2019).
2. Background. The A+ Awards Program is a continuous, highly visible, credible, and sought-after signal of recognition throughout the DON for those who best exhibit the principles of agility and accountability throughout the lifecycle of management.
3. Scope.
 - a. This guidance applies to the Office of the Secretary of the Navy (SECNAV), Assistant Secretaries of the Navy (ASN), and Staff Assistants. The ASNs are to nominate leaders for any award category, at any time throughout the year. All current award programs previously created by the ASNs now fall under this program and will continue as originally planned. The additional requirements of this instruction include notification to the Under Secretary of the Navy (UNSECNAV) and SECNAV, an "A+" lapel pin to be presented by the UNSECNAV, and official recognition by means of an All Navy message and media notification through the Chief of Information.
 - b. The DON shall select up to eight of the most deserving individuals or team representatives (four Navy and four Marine Corps) for this award, which recognizes the contributions of the Federal Workforce in support of the President's Management Agenda in the areas of mission, service, and stewardship.
 - c. The SECNAV, ASNs, and Staff Assistants shall work to extend the A+ Awards Program to the U.S. Marine Corps and the U.S. Navy as soon as practicable.
4. Roles and Responsibilities.
 - d. The DON Office of the Chief Management Officer (OCMO). The OCMO shall:
 - i. Manage the A+ Awards Program.
 - ii. Manage the A+ Award Program webpage. The webpage is located at: <https://www.secnav.navy.mil/ocmo/pages/awards.aspx>
 - iii. Be responsible for Strategic Communications for the program, including official recognition by means of an ALNAV and media notification through the Chief of Information.
 - e. ASN (Research, Development and Acquisition) (ASN (RD&A)) will support OCMO in the administration of the A+ Awards program.
 - f. All ASNs and Staff Assistants to the SECNAV are empowered and encouraged to forward their annual award winners to the SECNAV/UNSECNAV for consideration for

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the Office of Management and Budget-sponsored Gears of Government Awards program. Guidance and contact information is on the A+ website.

- g. The A+ Awards Program Board (“Board”) shall be comprised senior-level ASN and Staff Assistants. The Board shall be responsible for recommending A+ Award recipients for the Secretary’s or the Under’s consideration.

5. Description of Awards. Awards are encouraged whenever a member of the DON positively demonstrates one of or more of the following elements of agility in their management of resources such as money, property, people, or information: velocity, collaboration, visibility, adaptability, innovation, humility, skepticism, and trust.

- a. Award examples include:

- i. ASN (RD&A): Rapid prototyping or acquisition of a key warfighting component; innovative management that results in a new vendor supplying needed consumable parts that are mission critical; adaptable leadership in environmental compliance that is recognized by a local community.
- ii. ASN (Manpower and Reserve Affairs) (ASN (M&RA)): Speedy (velocity) and accurate achievement of a critical milestone in the Sailor or Marine 2025 Transformation Plan; questioning (skepticism) of a key recruiting shortfall that results in a new policy or procedure; self-reporting of an ongoing issue (humility) in personnel supply chain management that results in a faster, more robust throughput in training capacity.
- iii. ASN (Financial Management and Comptroller) (ASN (FM&C)): Making visible a key finding in an ongoing audit for the benefit of the rest of the DON team; creating a budgetary procedure that results in greater collaboration in making strategy drive the Program Objective Memorandum process; management advances in the area of real property assets that builds greater trust between the Navy and Marine Corps team.
- iv. ASN (Energy, Installations and Environment) (ASN (EI&E)): Innovation in reducing cost; creative policy or procedure recommendations producing measurable improvements in ashore and afloat safety; delivering quantifiable advances in energy efficient acquisition, improving energy independence, increasing alternative energy use, and enhancing energy resilience.
- v. Deputy Under Secretary of the Navy (DUSN): Creating highly visible partnership engagement opportunities that results in stronger DON international presence; achieving penetrating analysis of cryptographic intelligence that alerts DON leadership to new operations by potential adversaries.

- b. None of these examples are meant to limit or delineate award criteria in any way. The A+ Awards Program is meant to elevate the recognition afforded by the ASNs, DUSN,

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and Staff Assistants in an overarching framework that builds upon SECNAV and UNSECNAV strategy for greater agility and accountability.

6. Award Selection Criteria. In addition to Sections 5 and 8, the following general criteria from OMB's Gears of Government Award may also be considered for A+ Award selection:

- a. Achievement of positive, measurable outcomes, which may include supporting DON Priority Goals and Cross-Agency Priority Goals;
- b. Quality of communication and coordination with internal and external stakeholders;
- c. Scope of impact on staff/customers/DON mission and/or the significance of the services to those staff/customers/DON mission;
- d. Awardee's persistence in overcoming obstacles to achieve successful outcomes;
- e. Extent to which the individual or initiative exemplifies excellence in public service; and
- f. Particular consideration should be given to regional, field, and/or customer-facing staff, as well as diversity across mission areas and components of award recipients.

7. Number of Awards. The DON will have the opportunity to select the most deserving eight individuals or team representatives (four Navy and four Marine Corps) for this award, which recognizes the contributions of the Federal Workforce in support of the President's Management Agenda in the areas of mission, service, and stewardship.

8. Types of Awards. In order to maximize possible selection to the DoD Gears of Government Awards, the SECNAV shall follow as closely as practical the DoD's Gears of Government Award description types (below). Accordingly, there are two types of Awards that may be given: Individual or Team/Cross Functional Team (CFT).

- a. Individual Award: Recognizing individuals whose specific accomplishments, professionalism, and commitment to mission, service, or stewardship outcomes – either directly or through the three drivers of change – make them a role model for other employees. The SECNAV has the flexibility to determine the specific criteria for granting these awards. This could be through a single “heroic” act, or results of sustained achievements.
- b. Team/CFT Initiative Award: The DoD Gears of Government will recognize the Team/CFT responsible for driving the initiatives that have directly improved mission, service, or stewardship outcomes – either directly or through the three drivers of change – through the application of technology, improvements in operations, or other innovations.
 - i. Initiatives must demonstrate a tangible improvement, even if they are indirect in their impact. For example, this may include improvements to services provided to

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internal agency customers that manifestly result in improvements for external customers. General efforts to improve operations of program effectiveness, while valuable, do not qualify for an initiative award unless their ultimate impact on improving mission, service, or stewardship outcomes can be clearly identified.

- ii. Teams/CFTs should be considered and at least one selected if possible based on the results of the team initiative. However, due to limitations on the numbers of people that can be recognized at a White House ceremony, if a team/CFT is being considered for nomination for the President's award, only the most significant contributors (fewer than five), whose individual contributions are most significant to the initiative's success, should be selected for recognition. These individuals can represent the remainder of the team.

9. Award Selection. The SECNAV may select up to eight recipients (four for the Navy and four for the Marine Corps) in any one of the three categories: Mission, Service, and Stewardship.

- a. The Secretary of the Navy (Secretary), or the Under Secretary of the Navy (Under), should officially select and provide recognition to award recipients, through participation in a periodic or annual award ceremony, notes to recipients, or other appropriate action
- b. Of the award recipients, the Secretary or Under may designate two award recipients (one from the Navy and one from the Marine Corps) for Secretary of Defense Recognition, which, in turn, the OSD/CMO will submit for the President's Award. These nominations are to be submitted to OSD/CMO by the mid-December deadline to be considered for the President's Award.
- c. In addition to OSD/CMO Gears of Government Award process, the DON shall consider nominating individuals or CFT/Teams directly to the federal councils managed by the OMB, to include the Performance Improvement Council, the Chief Financial Officers Council, the Chief Acquisition Officers Council, and the Chief Information Officers Council.

10. Submission Process. In order to be considered for an A+ Award, the following are to be submitted:

- a. A brief overview of the award justification and the accomplishments for which the recipient is being recognized, specifically highlighting contribution towards mission, service, or stewardship;
- b. Attachments or links to images, videos, multimedia demos, etc., that showcase or demonstrate the recipient's work, if available;
- c. Whether agency/council leadership believes the awardee's contributions are significant enough to warrant consideration for the President's Award; and

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- d. A key point of contact that is familiar with the awardee's contributions that can answer any questions.
- e. For consistency, award package narrative justifications should be no longer than two pages (Times New Roman 12 font), and address aspects of the criteria above; citations for the award certificate are limited to four line.
- f. As best as possible, A+ Award criteria shall mirror the DoD's Gears of Government Award nominations/selection criteria (below):
 - i. Achievement of positive, measureable outcomes, which may include supporting implementation of the President's Management Agenda, the National Defense Strategy, the National Defense Business Operations Plan, contributions to achieving DoD Priority Goals, Cross Agency Priority Goals.
 - 1. Selection criteria must focus on tangible accomplishments: innovation, problem resolution, significant efficiency or effectiveness improvements, therefor would not include such actions as policy development.
 - 2. The names recipients should be those whose day-to-day work was most critical to the initiative, not the head of the office of organization.
 - ii. Quality of communication and coordination with internal and external stakeholders;
 - iii. Scope of impact on staff/customers/agency mission and/or the significance of the services to those staff/customer/agency mission;
 - iv. Persistence in overcoming obstacles to achieve successful outcomes;
 - v. Extent to which the individual or initiative exemplifies excellence in public service;
 - vi. Timeframe for consideration: typically recognizing accomplishments over the current or previous calendar year;
 - vii. All uniformed personnel and civilian employees considered for either an individual or team/CFT award must be in good standing to be eligible.

11. Timeline. The quarterly A+ awards will be selected among the previous quarter's Secretariat impact awards, through a board of the UNSECNAV and ASNs (or their designated representatives).

- a. A+ Award timeline will align with DoD's participation in the Gears of Government Award. The Gears of Government Awards recognize individuals and teams across the Federal workforce, both within and across agencies, whose performance and dedication

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support exceptional delivery of key outcomes for the American people: mission results, customer service, and accountable stewardship.

- b. Annual SECNAV winners will be announced in Second Quarter of the following calendar year and forwarded to OSD for Gears of Government consideration at the Federal Level.